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PP RUEHAST RUEHCHI RUEHDH RUEHFK RUEHHM RUEHKSO RUEHLN RUEHMA RUEHNAG  
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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3899  
INFO RUEHZU/ASIAN PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION PRIORITY  
RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RULSDMK/DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

UNCLAS KUALA LUMPUR 000116

SIPDIS

STATE FOR OES (NCARTER-FOSTER)  
STATE ALSO FOR OES/STC (EPADGETT)  
HHS/OSSI/DSI PASS TO OGHA (JMONAHAN/ACUMMINGS)  
TRANSPORTATION PASS TO NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY  
ADMINISTRATION

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [ECON](#) [SOCI](#) [ELTN](#) [UNDP](#) [UNGA](#) [MY](#)  
SUBJECT: MALAYSIA: NO SUBSTANTIVE RESPONSE YET TO  
DISTRACTED DRIVING DEMARCHE

REF: STATE 06703

¶1. (U) Embassy delivered the refetel demarche to Malaysia's Road Safety Department's (RSD) Director General Suret Singh. In follow-up conversations, Singh said that he reviewed the information and passed the information request to the legal department, but he did not have any further response. Embassy will continue following up with RSD and will report septel any additional response from GOM.

¶2. (U) Malaysia's law has prohibited the use of hand-held mobile phones while driving since 1998. Use of hands-free phones is allowed. The punishment for using a hand-held phone while driving includes fines up to 300 RM (approximately USD 85) and driver penalty points potentially resulting in increased insurance fees. The compliance rate is estimated to be about 85 percent.

¶3. (U) In 2009, Malaysia's Road Safety Department reported 6,700 lives lost in road accidents, the highest number recorded in the last 5 years. RSA lists speeding, tailgating, and motorcyclists not wearing helmets as the key causes. Over the long term, the number of road fatalities has decreased. RSD estimated that 10 years ago the number of fatalities was about 9,000, but due to constant campaigns for better driving and enforcement efforts, the number dropped down to around 6,200 in 2005, 2006, and 2007. There are no published statistics available on the number of fatalities involving texting.

¶4. (U) RSD's road safety campaigns focus on increasing awareness and compliance on seat belt use, helmet use for motorcyclists, and speeding. RSD estimates that rear seat belt use dropped from 50 percent to 20 percent over the last few years, primarily because of complacency and lack of enforcement. To reduce motorcycle fatalities, RSD has gotten private companies to sponsor safety-approved helmets for 145,000 motorcyclists with poor quality helmets. (NOTE: There are an estimated 8.5 million motorcyclists in Malaysia.) Compliance with helmet use laws is significantly lower in rural areas, primarily because of lack of enforcement.  
KEITH